

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



1 October 2010

Mrs K Walker
Headteacher
Manley Village School
Manley Road
Manley
Frodsham
Cheshire
WA6 9DU

Dear Mrs Walker

Ofsted survey inspection programme: leadership of more than one school.

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 and 29 September 2010 to look at the leadership of the federation. I would particularly like to thank the pupils for their generous engagement throughout my visit.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on the effectiveness of leadership to sustain improvement in all schools in the federation. The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to a national report. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributors or contributing institutions but individuals and institutions will not be identified in the main text without your agreement.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, staff, parents, local authority representatives, pupils and the scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The effectiveness of the federation leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is outstanding.

Outcomes

- Outcomes have improved for pupils at both Alvanley Primary and Manley Village School as a result of their federation in 2006. This was evidenced by the improved Ofsted inspection grades across key indicators in their most recent inspections. These reports clearly

acknowledged that progress for pupils were good and in some cases outstanding.

- Scrutiny of school documentation and data provided for me confirmed that currently, pupils continue to make good or outstanding progress in both schools. In particular, provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding and they make good and often better progress.
- The introduction of rigorous monitoring and tracking systems since federation has contributed to solidifying improvement trends within both institutions.
- Pupil behaviour across federation schools is outstanding and attendance rates are good.
- Pupils demonstrate a vibrancy and keenness for learning. They enjoy challenges and are adept at working within groups. Many demonstrate an exuberant confidence and enjoyment of school. I noted many examples of their consideration and support for each other exemplified by one boy reminding us all at one meeting that 'no one is more important than anyone else and all deserve respect'.
- Pupils are prepared very well for the next stage in their education.

Provision

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved as a result of the federation.
- The sharing of expertise, good practice and resources has enhanced teaching and learning and improved outcomes for pupils.
- Both Alvanley and Manley schools brought an innovative tradition of curriculum develop to the federation. Co-operation has enhanced this and the curriculum offered at both schools is now outstanding. This was very apparent from my tour of the schools, discussions with pupils and the perusal of their work. Innovative collaboration, particular around the arts, has inspired staff and pupils alike. Parents play an active role in further enhancing curriculum opportunity and choices.
- A strong tradition of care, support and guidance has been maintained at both schools and was reflected in both achieving an outstanding grade for this aspect in their last inspections.

Leadership and management

- The leadership of the federation by the headteacher in all respects is outstanding. This is fully complemented by outstanding, sensitive and astute governance. Significant barriers to the success of the federation existed at its inception. It was perceived by many within the local communities as a necessary marriage of convenience to enable the continued existence of two distinct and separate schools.
- Each school faced significant challenges. An early Ofsted inspection found one school to be satisfactory. The headteacher and governors overcame these barriers with skill and alacrity. The headteacher quickly established a talented, committed and supportive senior leadership team and a management structure that supported each school as well as the federation model. Key to their approach was equity between the schools, a strong sense of purpose and a focus on a detailed analysis of provision and self-challenge.
- Rigorous quality assurance systems were implemented across both schools. Changes were explained cogently to parents to elicit their support.
- Efficiency savings were made and finances stabilised. Throughout, governors offered their support while providing detailed scrutiny and rigorous challenge to senior leadership.
- Staff have grown in their appreciation of the benefits of federation through the sharing of good practice, improved staff development opportunities and curriculum enhancement and collaboration. Belief in the federation's success is now embedded at all levels of staffing in both schools.
- Crucially, change was always achieved within the context and spirit of the vision statement thus retaining the confidence of the two village communities. Both schools have flourished under the federation structure whilst maintaining their distinctive characteristics and community ethos.
- Leaders have been reserved in promoting the significant achievement and success of their federation model within the local communities and the wider community: they have rightly identified that the time is now opportune to do so.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- for leaders to promote more vigorously the significant achievement and success of their federation within the local communities and the wider community.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the leadership of the federation.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

May I take this opportunity to wish you, your staff and pupils and all involved in the Alvanley and Manley school communities continued success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty
Her Majesty's Inspector